

Appl. No. 10/080,934
Amdt. dated May 10, 2004
Reply to Office Action of December 9, 2003

PATENT

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Response to the Office Action is in response to the Office Action mailed December 9, 2003. Separately enclosed herewith is an extension of time for a two month time period to extend the response time to and including May 10, 2004, since May 9, 2004 fell on a Sunday.

35 USC §103

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-6, 11-13, 15-18, and 23 under 35 USC §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Bonneau, Jr. (U.S. Patent No. 6,394,346) in view of Takemoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,606,158).

The Examiner stated that Bonneau, Jr. discloses a contactless smart card high production encoding machine which includes a transport and rotator, with the transport and rotator comprising an input bezel for receiving a card from a user and a rotating transport carrier coupled to the input bezel for directing a card under a reader/writer antenna for determining the status of the card and a storage area coupled to the transport and rotator for storing and recirculating/reusing the card.

The Examiner states that Bonneau, Jr. fails to teach means for recirculating/reusing the card, an input bezel or card slot for inserting the card, a separator for separating the rejected cards into one bin and the discarded card into another bin, and means for determining the status of the card.

Bonneau, Jr. fails to teach or suggest a ticket transport machine for recirculating cards. Further, Bonneau, Jr. does not disclose the transport and rotator with a rotating transport carrier. In the present disclosure, disclosed is a ticket transport machine that accepts a card from a user and determines the status of the card, such as if the card is reusable or if the card is damaged, or if the card is a one-time use or specialty card. Based upon this information, the transport ticket machine of the present disclosure determines where the card should be stored in a storage area which comprises at least one bin and at least one stacker. In the present disclosure, when the user inserts a previously used card into the input bezel, the input bezel accepts the card

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and places the card on a rotating transport carrier. Once the rotating transport carrier directs the card adjacent to a reader/writer antenna to determine the status of the card, i.e., if the card is reusable or damaged or if the card is a one-time use card, then the rotating transport carrier is rotated or pivoted to transport the card to one of the two bins in the storage area. The rotating transport carrier is rotatable, or pivots upon a pivot point so that the card may be transported to one of many locations based upon the status of the card. In addition, when a user requests a card from the ticket transport machine, a card is separated from the card stack and moved through a guide channel into the transport and rotator and the card is then placed in the ticket chute for retrieval by the user.

In stark contrast, Bonneau, Jr. discloses a machine and method for testing a plurality of unused cards. The unused cards have never been distributed to a user. The cards are ran through a series of test positions to determine if the cards have defects and therefore the cards are not re-circulated in the sense that they are not input into an input bezel by a user. In Bonneau, Jr., multiple unused cards are loaded in a high speed feeder and are then serially fed into entry rollers where the cards are tested a series of times to determine defects in the cards. If a card is found defective, it is transported into a particular magazine, and the remaining which are not defective are transported into a different magazine or magazines. The remaining cards are either placed in a particular magazine based upon the type of the card. Bonneau, Jr. is only directed toward testing a plurality of unused cards and fails to teach or suggest a transport machine that contains an input bezel for receiving a used card from a user and places the used card into one of a plurality of bins depending upon whether the used card can be recirculated.

Furthermore, Bonneau, Jr. fails to teach or suggest separating the card from a card stack and moving the card through a guide channel into a transport and rotator in which a card is then placed in a ticket chute for retrieval by a user.

In addition, Bonneau, Jr. does not disclose a rotating transport carrier as presently claimed in the present disclosure. In Bonneau, Jr. et al., what the Examiner refers to as "a rotating transport carrier 52" is actually a first transport roller 52 and a second transport roller 54 so that transport control of the card 2 switches from the first belt transport 44 to the second belt transport 46. See column 5, lines 34-37 and Fig. 1. The transport rollers 52 and 54 in Bonneau,

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Jr. et al. are not a rotating transport carrier that pivots as a unit to direct a card to the proper location as disclosed and claimed herein. Instead, the transport rollers 52 and 54 in Bonneau, Jr. are simply rollers that transport a card from a first level to a second level but the rollers do not pivot as a unitary structure as disclosed and claimed herein.

Further, Takemoto et al. discloses a collection and processing machine for recycling recording media in a gaming or game play situation where none of the rollers rotate or pivot as a unitary structure as disclosed or claimed in the present application. Instead, Takemoto et al. disclose and claim a machine that is part of a larger system, when the larger system includes a dispensing stacker and an issuing machine. See Figs. 1 and 2, wherein the collection and processing apparatus is identified as element 10 which is separate from the dispensing stacker and the issuing machine. The collection and processing apparatus is identified as item 10 and shown as a separate unit in Fig. 2. Further, Takemoto et al. do not disclose a rotating transport carrier as presently disclosed and claimed. Further yet, Takemoto et al. do not disclose a rotating transport carrier that is also utilized for dispensing a card from a stack.

Further yet, since Bonneau, Jr. does not disclose a rotating transport carrier, and Takemoto et al. do not disclose a rotating transport carrier, amongst other things, and further since Bonneau, Jr. et al. is directed to a machine used in a production process for testing unused cards and Takemoto et al. is only a collection and processing machine used only for recycling cards, it would not have been obvious to one skilled in the art to combine the disclosure of Bonneau, Jr. with the disclosure of Takemoto et al. to achieve a ticket transport machine as presently disclosed and claimed herein. As best determined by the Takemoto et al. disclosure, the collection and processing machine disclosed and claimed in Takemoto et al. does not issue new cards let alone issue new cards utilizing a rotating transport carrier as presently disclosed and claimed in the present application.

Therefore, the 35 USC §103 rejection should be withdrawn as to all of the pending claims. The applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application.

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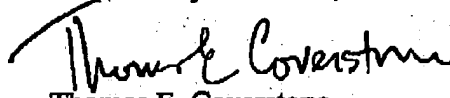
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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 858-350-6100.

Respectfully submitted,


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